

Octavius obtains the title 'Imperator' and surname 'Augustus.'

Power of Augustus.

policy of moderation and conciliation. He was everywhere recognized as the supreme ruler of the Roman empire, nevertheless he simulated the actions and adopted the manners of a simple Roman citizen. Welcomed at Rome by the senate and the people as the conqueror of Antony and the restorer of Roman authority in the East, the most servile adulation greeted him on all sides. He was offered the position of dictator, but this he refused. He was given the title of *Imperator*, or supreme commander of the army, and two years after his return to Rome the senate conferred on him the unusual surname of *Augustus* (Venerable), the name by which he is best known to history. It was his policy to wield all the power of an absolute king and dictator under the guise of republican forms. Hence the letter of the old constitution was observed while the spirit was destroyed. The senate continued to meet and deliberate; consuls and other magistrates were elected annually; tribunes of the people were appointed, and, tribes met as of old in their legislative capacity. But Augustus was given something more than the power of the consuls, and sat with them in the discharge of their duties. So too he exercised the powers of the censors, and of the tribunes, in conjunction with these regularly chosen magistrates. The tribes met only to register his decrees and elect his nominees. The senate was his obedient tool, and in his presence and at his dictation did little else than carry out his wishes. In addition to all these powers he was given the sole command of the Roman armies, and the proconsular power out of Rome over the whole empire was in his hands. Thus he could control and direct at pleasure the movements of the Roman legions and govern the provinces by deputies or legates. His position as permanent censor enabled him to purge the senate of unworthy members, a power which he exercised judiciously in the interests of the dignity of that assembly. The tribuneship for life gave him power to annul the decrees of the senate and interfere with all the acts of the magistrates. It also gave him the power to summon the senate and the tribes, and to make motions, which as a matter of course carried, before these assemblies. Subsequently, after the death of Lepidus, he conferred upon himself the office of *pontifex maximus*, and this